GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3163
ANSWERED ON:21.03.2017
Pending Projects
Lokhande Shri Sadashiv Kisan;Ninama Shri Manshankar;Sarmah Shri Ram Prasad;Shetti Shri Raju alias Devappa Anna;Singh Shri Bharat;Trivedi Shri Dinesh

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether various developmental projects/proposals for roads, railways, small, medium and big hydel power/power projects are pending with the Government for Environmental/Forest Clearance;
(b) if so, the details thereof during each of the last three years and the current year, Category/State/UT-wise;
(c) whether the Government has conducted any study to assess the Losses caused due to delay in granting clearance for the said projects;
(d) if so, the details thereof; and
(e) the steps/measures taken by the Government to expedite the process for grant of clearance?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE)

(a) & (b) At present, 754 project proposals for environmental clearance and 194 project proposals for forest clearance have been received. The details are given at Annexure 1 & 2 respectively.

(c) & (d) No specific study of losses caused by possible or actual delays in granting environmental clearance has been made. However, the Government makes all efforts to appraise the projects from environmental angle and grant clearances within the stipulated period. Applications for environment clearance are to be disposed of normally within a total of 105 days (60 days for appraisal and 45 days for communicating the decision) of receipt of complete application with requisite documents except where the regulatory authority disagrees with the recommendations of the Expert Appraisal Committee / State Level Expert Appraisal Committee. The decision of the regulatory authority is to be conveyed to the applicant within next 30 days. Generally, the timelines specified in the EIA Notification are followed. By and large, the observed delays in grant of environment clearance are attributable to non-submission of timely and complete information by the project proponents.

(e) Major initiatives taken by the Ministry to expedite the process of Environment Clearance inter-alia include use of information technology, increasing of Regional Offices from six to ten, constitution of Regional Empowered Committees (REC), delegation of powers to Regional Office for forest diversion, grant of FC by RECs for linear projects, delegation of more powers to State level Environment Impact Assessment Authorities (SEIAAs), standardization of Terms of Reference for all sectors, finalisation of Terms of Reference (TORs) within 30 days, general approval for roads and other strategic infrastructure in area of 100 km from line of actual control, exemption to highway projects in border states from scoping requirement and exempting linear projects in border states from the requirement of public hearing subject to suitable conditions, delegation of powers to District Environment Impact Assessment Authority (DEIAA) for mining of minor minerals including sand, constitution of additional Expert Appraisal Committees, regular meetings of the Expert Appraisal Committees, review of pending projects at various levels in the government etc.

Major initiatives taken to streamlining forest clearance process include receipt of applications online, processing applications in a time bound manner, use of Geographical Information System (GIS) based decision support system, advance identification of compact/sizeable blocks of non-forest land or revenue forest land free from encumbrance/ encroachment for compensatory afforestation, depositing of compensatory levies with Adhoc CAMPA through e-portal etc. States/ UTs have been advised to ensure that investigations and surveys carried out in connection with development projects such as transmission lines, hydro-electric projects, seismic surveys, exploration for oil drilling, mining etc. in wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and sample plots demarcated by the Forest Department do not attract the provisions of the FC Act as long as these surveys do not involve any clearing of forest or cutting of trees, and operations are restricted to clearing of bushes and lopping of tree branches for purpose of sighting.

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